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6 **OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**
7 **FINAL REPORT 9-28-04**
8 **AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION**
9 **1-18-05**
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12

13 **INTRODUCTION**
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15 The Open Space Committee was established by the Loomis Town Council on January 13,
16 2004 to identify natural features and open space in the Town and make recommendations
17 to the Town Planning Commission on rank and preservation of same, including
18 identifying where money would be obtained to acquire and maintain the things identified
19 for purchase and maintenance.
20

21 The Committee met on a monthly basis beginning January 29, 2004. After nine meetings
22 that included presentations from people involved in open space preservation such as
23 Gregg Bates, Dry Creek Conservancy; Kate Kirsch, Dry Creek Greenway; Loren Clark,
24 Placer Legacy; Ed Pandolfino, Audubon Society and Sierra Club, and an on-site review
25 of parcels within the Town, the Committee submits these recommendations.
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29 **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
30

31 Walt Scherer, Chairman and Vice Mayor
32 Jean Wilson, Vice Chair and Planning Commissioner
33 Giezel Banyas
34 Mike Boberg
35 Patricia Brown
36 Carol Goldberg*
37

Norm Hile
Rhon Martin
Ferrall Pierce
Mike Shellito

Roger & Irene Smith
Janet Thew
Kurt Turner

38 *Ms. Goldberg resigned in April 2004
39

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION LIST

In order to identify natural features and open space in the Town and make recommendations on their rank and preservation, the committee developed a ranking system and a methodology to use in reviewing the recommended list and for considering additional parcels to form a “living” list of parcels for open space preservation.

The Committee determined that the Town has a need to more adequately and specifically address the preservation of unimproved natural resource lands separate from other lands defined as open space in the Town’s General Plan and has therefore written its report with an emphasis on this need.

The various characteristics that natural resource lands might include, grouped into five categories are:

- 1 Habitat; riparian and wildlife corridors; native or specimen trees; large oak woodlands; wetlands; oak mitigation banking area
- 2 Public use and value, including visual access
- 3 Continuity and contiguity with other open space; context with adjacent development
- 4 Size of open space area
- 5 Historic and cultural value; unique natural features

If each category of characteristics is ranked between 0 to 3 (0 having no value, 1 having little value, 2 moderate value and 3 being high in value) a number can be assigned to a parcel to compare it to other parcels. The Committee followed this process to create the following list of eight parcels to be placed on a Town of Loomis Natural Resource Lands Preservation List, with the following rankings:

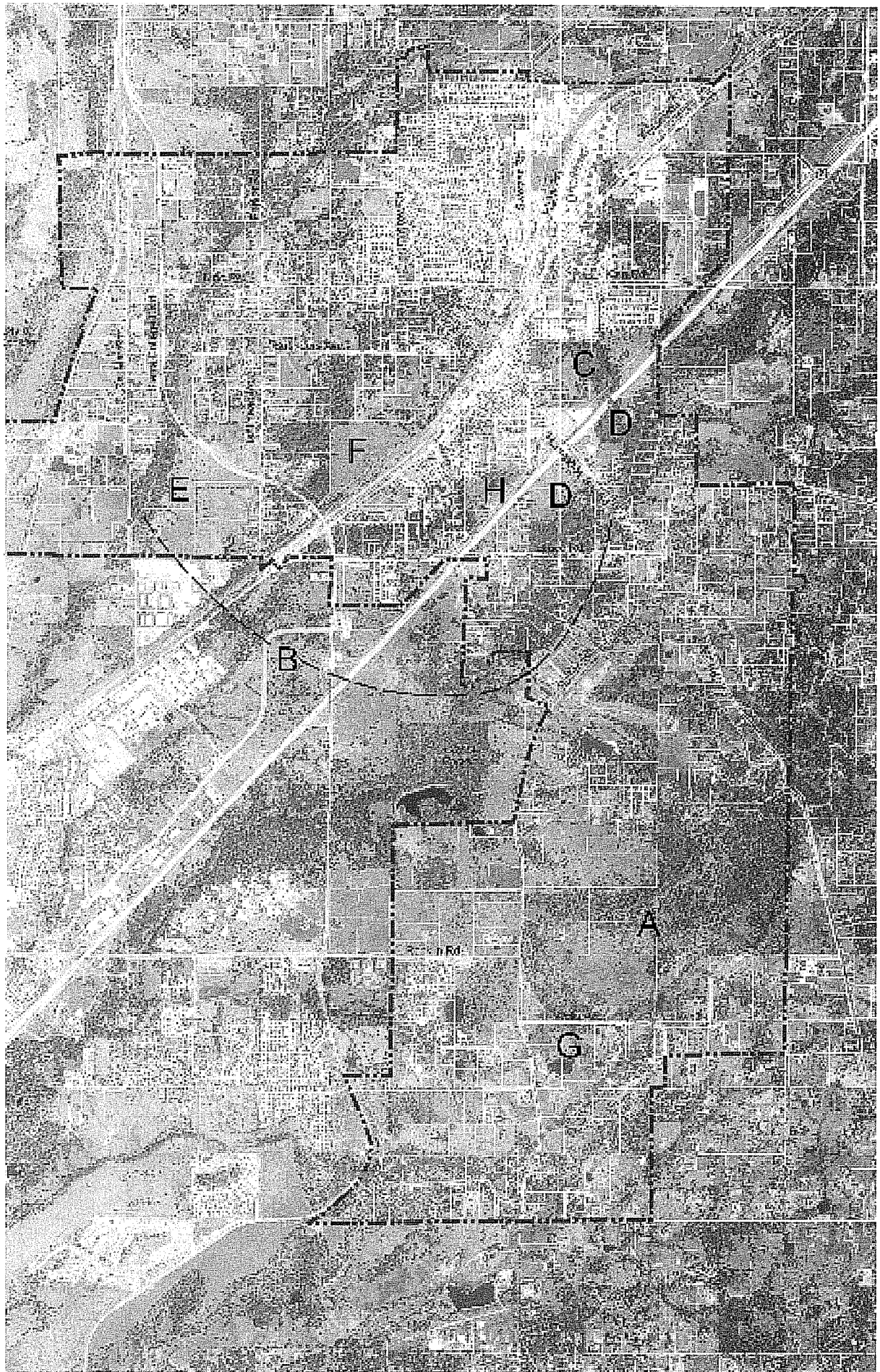
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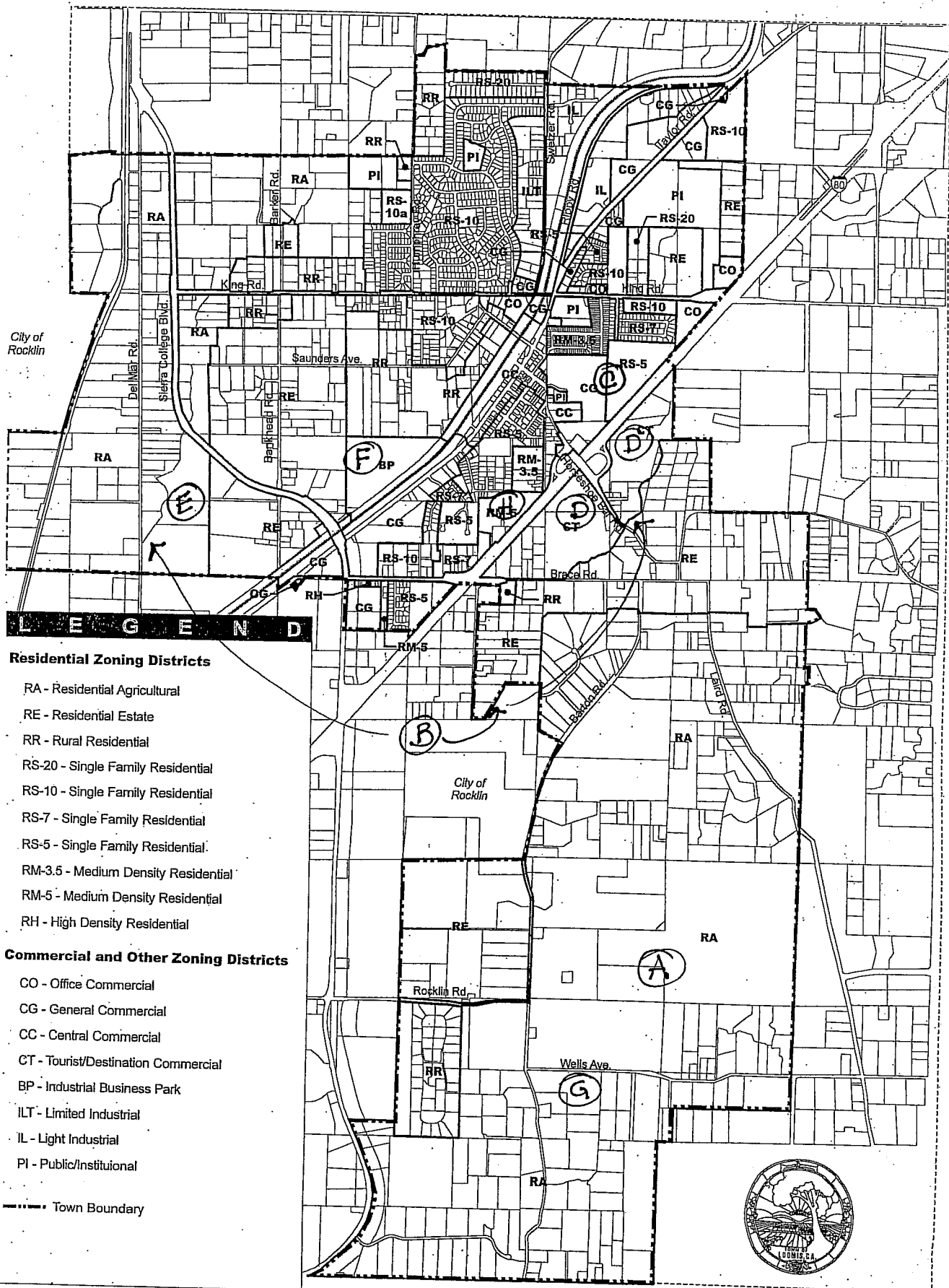
Potential Parcels to Consider for Further Open Space <u>Natural Resource</u> Needs	1	2	3	4	5	Total	RANKING
A. Loomis Hills (260/320 acres)	38	32	33	39	30	172	.882
B. Dry Creek Greenway (Secret Ravine and Antelope Creek areas)*	35	36	36	30	29	166	.851
C. Lands behind Raleys (67 acres)	30	39	34	30	24	157	.805
D. South of I-80, Commercial Tourist (115 acres)	35	32	28	34	24	153	.785
E. Shadowbrook area (54 acres)	34	31	30	29	28	152	.779
F. Doring/Trimm Business Park site (18 and 30 acres)	32	27	31	27	24	141	.770
G. Wells and Barton – Borman (20 acres)	28	21	24	20	9	102	.523
H. Heritage Park (16 acres)	21	23	20	17	12	93	.477

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Maximum total is 195. Maximum ranking is 1.

*Salmon habitat/viewing areas along Secret Ravine at Dias road, Indian Creek Road and Becker Road





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2
3 The Town should strongly consider these parcels for acquiring natural resource lands
4 within these parcels, conservation easements and/or using development laws and
5 practices to secure open space /natural resource preservation. The actions to take
6 regarding the listed properties are:

- 7 A. Send letter to each property owner advising them that the property is a natural
8 resource lands candidate and eligible for special considerations/incentives (*to*
9 *be determined*).
- 10
11 B. Develop a list of incentives that can be offered to owners of “listed” properties
12 to encourage preservation of natural resources
- 13
14 C. Develop an general information package (brochure?) promoting natural
15 resource preservation and how a property owner can benefit
- 16
17 D. Conduct a public relations campaign to raise awareness of the importance of
18 natural resource lands in Loomis.
- 19
20

21 **EXISTING OPEN SPACE / NATURAL RESOURCE POLICIES**

22

23 The Town of Loomis already has in its General Plan most of the open space policies that
24 it needs to protect and preserve natural resources (see attached list). However, the
25 General Plan is a fairly recent policy document and it appears that these policies could
26 use reinforcement and support through implementation programs. The Committee
27 recommends that the new programs being recommended be reviewed annually by the
28 Council and Planning Commission via a staff report that explains how open space/natural
29 resource goals are being accomplished and how the policies themselves received specific
30 attention in the practices that the Town performed during the prior year.

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33 **NEW POLICY OR PRACTICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

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35 Following are policies or implementation programs that the Committee recommends for
36 revising the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance or other policy documents.

37

38 **GENERAL PLAN**

39

40 Add a policy to preserve ridgelines (with implementation program to define ridgeline)
41 ~~that indicates the 450 foot contour level or higher should get special attention.~~

42

43 Amend the implementation program in Natural Resources section to require a site
44 specific wetlands/riparian area field survey of the Town for use with development
45 applications (for use in the eventual compilation of a comprehensive natural resource
46 inventory of the Town) and develop regulations to protect these resources.

47

1 Amend the definition of creek/riparian area to include more streams and creek areas in
2 town than the blue line areas shown on USGS map and to ~~include~~ *consider including*
3 areas adjacent to creek/riparian areas to be preserved for habitat protection (amend
4 implementation program to identify streams, creek/riparian areas)
5

6 Add a policy indicating that the Town will have a general expectation that any
7 development proposed for parcels identified (listed) as natural resource land candidates
8 will be subject to special requirements (*to be determined*) and eligible for special
9 incentives.
10

11 Amend Implementation Program in Natural Resources section: The Town will
12 participate in public programs emphasizing awareness of open space and natural resource
13 conservation issues. When feasible, such programs should be coordinated with the local
14 school districts and community groups. Efforts should be made to reach all households
15 (as through refuse billing) and provide accessibility through the timing and location of
16 these programs. During these outreach efforts, ask the public for other suggestions on
17 open space preservation and incentives. Create nature centers and interpretive trails to
18 educate the public about creeks, oak woodlands and grasslands.
19

20 Amend Implementation Program in Community Development-Design and Character to
21 include on the project application, and on the staff report, a required section on how the
22 project design respects the key natural resources; how the project design identifies and
23 conserves special areas of high ecological sensitivity such as preserving riparian
24 corridors, wildlife, wetlands and oak woodlands.
25

26 Amend Implementation Program in Natural Resources to create a list of properties with
27 significant open space value, with notification to the owners of this listing and incentives,
28 or requirements, for open space preservation.
29

30 Amend Implementation Program in Natural Resources section to explore ~~development~~
31 ~~alternatives and standards to~~ *that* minimize impacts on open space areas. Such
32 techniques may include grading standards, limitation of development intensity and
33 clustered development. Where appropriate, development design should maximize the
34 total open space frontage visually accessible to public view. Where appropriate,
35 encourage native plants and landscaping that provide wildlife habitat. Address project
36 linkages to local and regional open space networks, through project review. Where
37 appropriate, utilize development agreements to ensure open space preservation,
38 maintenance and management techniques.
39

40 Amend Implementation Program in Natural Resources section to have staff work with
41 land trusts, other wildlife groups (private and public) to become custodians of open space
42 where appropriate (please see excerpts from Placer Legacy and Dry Creek Parkway
43 reports attached).
44

45 Amend Implementation Program in Natural Resources section to explore and utilize a
46 variety of mechanisms to promote and ensure the preservation and/or acquisition of
47 designated open space resources. Such mechanisms may include, but are not limited to,

1 dedication, easements, fee-title purchase, donations, transfer or purchase of development
2 rights, credits against park dedication requirements.

3
4 If it is determined by the Town that a designated open space resource *offered to the town*
5 is not desired for public ownership, the Town may designate the preservation of such
6 resource in private ownership or land trust. A decision not to seek public ownership may
7 occur when the resource is not desired for public access, and where public management
8 and maintenance can not be efficiently accommodated. In such cases, the permanent
9 preservation of the resource shall- *may* be ensured through land use and zoning, recorded
10 map, deed restriction, conservation easement, or other Town approved mechanism.

11
12 Create a separate open space ~~element~~ *policy resolution, in coordination with-in* the
13 General Plan to better define open space types and provide a central location to find
14 policies, rules and regulations associated with acquiring and preserving same.

15 16 17 ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

18
19 Consider a limitation on impervious coverage in zoning ordinance to implement policies
20 for stream protection and water quality

21
22 Re-consider the clustering regulations in the context of preserving open space and natural
23 resources and the list of open space preservation parcels. Also check clustering
24 regulations consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Code to insure that
25 clustering can only be approved when it can be shown that it will result in significant
26 benefit to the community and/or significant preservation of natural resource lands.

27
28 Amend definition of creek/riparian area to include more streams and creek areas in town
29 than the blue line areas shown on USGS map and to consider requiring areas adjacent to
30 creek/riparian areas to be preserved for habitat protection. It would be helpful to have an
31 inventory prepared to show the streams and creeks.

32
33 Where appropriate require any fencing to be setback from property line (to insure
34 preservation of corridors for wildlife).

35 36 37 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

38
39 Limit the use of curb and gutter and sidewalks to preserve rural feeling (e.g. Carolinda
40 development off Barton). Check current standards in rural areas to see if needed/put in
41 allowance of modification after review of road use or terrain

42 43 DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

44
45 Limit the extent to which properties could be cleared of valued natural resources and
46 habitat when considering subdivisions.

1 Require park and open space lands dedication within residential development where
2 appropriate instead of fees, particularly on larger subdivision (10-50 lots) with ongoing
3 ~~maintenance agreements for neighborhood parks or open space requiring minimal~~
4 ~~monitoring~~ *possible assessments depending on on-going fee study*; require offers of
5 dedication of land when subdivision exceeds 50 lots or dwelling units instead of taking
6 park dedication fees. When appropriate apply a percentage for land dedication versus
7 acres per population with use of development agreements on subdivisions composed of
8 large lots (like 1 acre or larger) to obtain suitable open space.
9 Designate features the town expects to be preserved (either generically or specific to the
10 subdivision map).

11
12 Consider wildlife corridor or preserve considerations, consultant for town, maybe from
13 Natural Resources Conservation Service, maximize potential for corridors. It would be
14 beneficial to identify where corridors are and where they could be.

15
16 Require Town approval of *one or more* building site areas *to be* delineated on tentative
17 maps and final map documents on subdivisions (two or more lots) containing natural
18 resource features (ponds, trees, rock outcroppings and other recognized resource values).
19 *On lots without significant resources, this may be setback areas.*

20
21 Encourage preservation of large expanses of trees that can be left in a natural area.

22
23 Consider continuation of the Open Space Committee to review projects in identified
24 areas, evaluate progress in Open Space development and education, identify other open
25 space and natural areas, and develop finance information packet.

26 27 28 **COORDINATION WITH AGENCIES**

29
30 Coordinate with other agencies and groups such as: Placer Legacy, Placer Land Trust,
31 Dry Creek Conservancy, Dry Creek Parkway to achieve the open space goals of the
32 Town.

33 34 35 **PROJECTS IN PROGRESS**

36
37 For development projects already in progress, wherein potential for open space preservation
38 exists (e.g. projects in Open Space Preservation List above), Town ~~should~~ *may* identify and
39 exercise any remaining opportunities to preserve open space. These opportunities might include:

- 40
41 1. **Development Notebooks:** Town ~~should~~ *may* require and closely review
42 “notebooking” for any proposed lots that could affect open space preservation, with
43 particular attention to exercising control on placement of structures and other
44 property modifications that would impact open space goals.
 - 45
46 2. **CC&R’s:** Town should review CC&R’s to insure / achieve compatability with open
47 space preservation goals.
- 48

- 1 3. **Direct Contact with owner /developer:** Town should communicate open space
2 goals with owner / developer and promote a win-win “partnering” approach to
3 preserving open space.
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10 **FEES AND FUNDING THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER**

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- 12 1. Have the necessary studies prepared to revise the park land dedication fee
13
14 2. Financial considerations surrounding open space creation and maintenance
15 include the following:
16
17 A. Initial Capital Funds (e.g. to purchase land or easements)
18 (1) Town funds
19 (2) Outside funding (e.g. Placer Land trust, Placer Legacy,
20 Loomis Basin Parks Foundation, Horseman’s Association,
21 Loomis Schools, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Dry Creek
22 Conservation Group, California Oaks Foundation, other local
23 conservation groups, i.e., Bickford Ranch, Clover Valley)
24 for expertise and/or financial assistance.
25
26 B. Long-Term Maintenance Funds
27 (1) Town funds
28 (2) Homeowner fees
29 (3) Outside funding / management
30 (4) CFDs (community facility districts) for maintenance
31
32 C. Developer contributions / benefits
33 (1) tax deductions & credits (state & federal)
34 (2) premium prices for lots / homes due to open space
35 (3) Town incentives (e.g. deferrals or fee modifications)
36 (4) development agreement impact fees
37

38 Staff should work with developers to identify financial resources that might be
39 available for creating open space in a specific project. Town should also prepare
40 an overview paper (Open Space Financial Perspective) on this subject to give to
41 developers. Additional list of funding sources and options, attached.
42
43
44

- 45 3. Recommend that Town research additional funding such as the following:
46
47 A. Grants in addition to those on eCivis list:

- Calif Wildlife Conservation Board
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants
- EPA Region 9 Wetland Protection Grants
- EPA Smart Growth Achievement Awards
- Tides Foundation – California Wildlands Grassroots Fund
- Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
- Kodak American Greenways Awards Program

B. Other Funding

- State Environmental Resource Center
- USDA Wetlands Reserve
- USDA Farm Service Agency SEP and CREP programs
- Impact fee on development
- Special assessment districts
- Community facilities district
- Property transfer fee

C. Tax arrangements available to landowners

- Calif Natural Heritage Preservation Trust Act of 2000 (see attached article from Lawrence Grossman that explains the tax savings for conservation easement donations)
- Conservation trust
- Charitable remainder trust
- Gift annuity trust
- Installment purchase agreements (IPAs)

D. Local trusts

- Wildlife Heritage Foundation
- Placer Land Trust
- Wildlands Inc.

E. More information

- Local Govt Environmental Assistance Network
- Land Trust Association
- Trust for Public land